MON DEC 2 1974 POST

FBI ties to Justice Dept. are strained

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WASHINGTON: Increasingly strained relations between the FBI and its parent Justice Department are causing concern in law enforcement circles that the efficiency of the fabled police agency might be permanently damaged.

The bureau's prestige is at the lowest ebb in its illustrious history. Morale among its 8600 agents is sagging. And the situation is expected to worsen as further disclosures are made about the clandestine counterintelligence program directed by the late Director J. Edgar Hoover during the height of unrest over the Vietnam war.

HOOVER PUT his agents and paid informants secretly into a number of antiwar groups in an effort to disrupt them. This, it has been charged, was an "extra legal" action without constitutional foundation.

An initial report on this so-called Cointelpro already has been made public by Atty. Gen. William B. Saxbe over the strong protest of FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley and his subordinates. And Saxbe has warned the bureau that under the recently strengthened Freedom of Information Act, he has little choice but to comply with other requests for disclosure of some of the program's specifics, including records and documents.

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